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Information and communications technologies for development

Globalization and interdependence: science and technology for development

Social development: social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Questions relating to information

Letter dated 8 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to write to you on the occasion of the Global Youth Summit, held in San José from 9 to 11 September 2013 under the auspices of our Government and the International Telecommunication Union.

In this connection, I have the pleasure of transmitting herewith a copy of the outcome document, entitled "Costa Rica Declaration" (see annex), and requesting that you have the present letter and its annex circulated to all Members of the United Nations as a document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly under agenda items 16, 21 (b), 27 (b) and 55.

(*Signed*) Eduardo **Ulibarri**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 8 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

2013 Costa Rica Declaration

Global Youth Summit

[Original: English and Spanish]

We, the participants of the Global Youth Summit, represented here and online, on behalf of other young people around the world, in recognition of our unique place and role in a deeply transformed and interconnected world, which will be shaped by the post-2015 global development agenda declare the following:

Youth are transforming our world. We are a force for progress. Ensuring our full participation in decision-making processes is vital to improving democracy. We urgently require measurable targets to monitor the empowerment of young people at regional, national and international levels.

We call on Member States to provide more flexible, dynamic, transparent and open structures for governance that engages more directly with citizens.

We call for the creation of open data, information and technical knowledge, in all areas critical to our lives. Health, civic engagement, online protection, environmental protection and economic success all depend on having unfettered access to knowledge which information and communications technologies (ICTs) can extend to everyone. The spread of information among young people can directly foster empowerment and innovation on a global scale.

The key to a new global development agenda is innovation. Old methods and systems are poorly suited to the transformed and interconnected communities we live in today. We call on Member States, civil society and the private sector to foster innovation to build the future we want.

A key barrier is a lack of universal, global access to ICT technologies, platforms and devices and the underlying infrastructure to support them. Youth can act as both beneficiaries and ambassadors for wider and improved access.

We require equitable and universal access to ICTs, particularly for women and girls, and other groups marginalized by the digital divide, for the following reasons (in order of priority):

To get ahead:

- We call on Governments, civil society and the private sector to work together to provide the training and resources young people need to innovate and create the businesses and industries of the future.
- We seek access to education and knowledge-sharing, regardless of where we are or whether we can pay.
- We need new and innovative methods that lower barriers to youth employment and ensure decent, rewarding and fulfilling work.

- We want to ensure all students have access to ICT skills and technologies for their intellectual, economic and political empowerment.
- We require education systems that equip students with the theoretical knowledge and a practical mix of marketable, innovative and relevant skills to compete in a global digital economy.

To change our world:

- We demand a voice. We ask that Member States pursue methods to make voting, openness and accountability more feasible online. We believe this will make Governments more accessible, open and understandable. We further call for sustained, youth-driven mechanisms by which to make our voices heard at local, national and international levels.
- We are deeply concerned by the barriers between leaders and young citizens. We call for innovative use of communication technologies as a means of engaging with those who represent us.
- We seek online spaces where we can share and express the richness and diversity of our cultural heritages and religious practices, break down barriers of intolerance and fear, and build communities based on cultural preservation and mutual respect.
- We seek means to move from social commentary to social change and become more responsible and proactive global citizens, including through strong support for community-based volunteerism.

To respect our environment:

- We seek better access to and dissemination of honest and accurate information on environmental issues and guidance on steps we can take to protect the environment.
- We call on Member States to leverage innovative ICT-based tools for warning, information, preparedness and recovery in the face of natural disasters.
- We urgently require broader and more efficient use of renewable and sustainable energy and food sources, as well as means and methods to further expand their use, most noticeably in the agricultural sector.
- We seek a world where we do not have to choose between quality of life and quality of the environment, through ethically sourced products and commodities, sustainable resource use, green businesses and proper disposal of e-waste.
- We call for commitments from Member States, civil society and businesses to support those who choose to be environmentally responsible, through incentives and rewards.

To be safe:

- We recognize the positive and negative aspects of new technologies and call for information, education and support to make our online communities safe and secure. We urge educational institutions and digital content creators to aid us in this process.

- We advocate that the same rights of freedom of speech, association and privacy granted in the real world be explicitly extended online.
- We urge fellow young people to act and present themselves responsibly online and for educational and social structures to guide us in this process.
- We call for policies and appropriate and effective frameworks that protect the use of private data and intellectual property, and deter online criminal activity.

To be healthy:

- We seek innovative systems which connect people to information on health services, including mental health services, to improve issues of accessibility, affordability and acceptability.
- Geography should not be a barrier to health care. We seek technologies that connect us with health care remotely.
- We seek tools to better inform us about healthy lifestyles and health concerns, which help us act on that information, especially in areas of sexual and reproductive health, and in dealing with issues of disability, including knowledge to reduce problems of stigma and fear associated with many diseases.
- We call for the widespread availability to report and receive information, through ICT, of outbreaks, disasters, epidemics and/or other events which endanger our health.
- We call on Member States to empower young people to develop ICT tools that improve the experience of health care while taking into account best practices and bioethics that are currently part of offline health-care processes.

In conclusion:

We call on the United Nations, the international community and all Member States to consider our words and put them into action. We call upon all young people around the world, in partnership with world leaders, to treat this document not as an outcome but as a starting place for continued dialogue. Young people should be included as full partners in the post-2015 process and preserve the world we want for the youth of tomorrow.